

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 147569

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PBOR, US, PN

SUBJECT:PERIODIC ACTIVITIES REPORT JUNE 3-9

REF: STATE 140905

1. PRESIDENTS TRIP: WE ARE AWAITING DECISIONS ON THE COM-
POSITION OF THE OFFICIAL US PARTY. SO FAR ABOUT 5 CONGRESS-
MEN AND 15 OF THE SENATORS INVITED (WITHOUT SPOUSES) HAVE
INDICATED THEY WILL ATTEND. L HAS PROVIDED LEGAL RULING,
SUPPORTED BY JUSTICE, AGAINST USG EMPLOYEES ACCEPTING FREE
GOP TRANSPORTATION TO NEXT WEEK'S CEREMONIES. WE ARE IN-
VESTIGATING POSSIBILITIES RELATING TO PAYMENT FOR TRANSPORTA-
TION. A BACKGROUND BRIEFING OF THE PRESS PRIOR TO THE TRIP
WILL BE DONE NEXT WEEK. THE RATIFICATION DOCUMENTS ARE
EXPECTED TO BE MADE PUBLIC TOWARD THE END OF NEXT WEEK.
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2. RATIFICATION INSTRUMENTS: THE US AND PANAMANIAN INSTRU-
MENTS OF RATIFICATION AND THE DRAFT PROTOCOL (WITH A MINOR
TECHNICAL CHANGE) HAVE RECEIVED APPROPRIATE SENATE APPROVAL.
FOLLOWING WHITE HOUSE APPROVAL OF THE DOCUMENTS, SPANISH AND
ENGLISH TEXTS WILL BE CABLED TO THE EMBASSY.

3. HELMS AIRS VIEWS: AS EXPECTED (REFTEL) ON JUNE 5 SENATOR HELMS AIRED HIS VIEWS ON THE SENATE FLOOR THAT THE APRIL

25 GOP COMMUNIQUE REPUDIATED THE SENATE'S ACTIONS ON THE TREATIES AND THAT, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE GOP'S WITHDRAWAL OF THE COMMUNIQUE, THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO HOLD ANOTHER PLEBISCITE ON THE TEXTS OF THE TREATIES AS CHANGED BY THE SENATE OR RETURN THEM TO THE SENATE FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE GOP INTERPRETATION. HELMS ALSO SENT A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE SAME DATE AND A DRAFT REPLY HAS BEEN PREPARED.

4. SEA LEVEL CANAL HEARINGS: AMBASSADOR POPPER IS EXPECTED TO BE THE DEPARTMENT WITNESS AT JUNE 27 AND 28 HEARINGS OF THE HOUSE'S PANCANAL SUBCOMMITTEE WITH REGARD TO THE GRAVEL AND MURPHY PROPOSALS ON A SEA LEVEL CANAL STUDY.

5. CEMETERIES: AT JUNE 9 MEETING STATE OFFICERS REACHED CONSENSUS WITH DOD AND BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES THAT HIGH LEVEL USG OFFICIAL SHOULD MENTION DURING PRESIDENT'S TRIP OUR INTEREST IN NEGOTIATING AGREEMENT ON CEMETERIES IN NEXT FEW MONTHS. TALKS WOULD BE IN PANAMA WITH TECHNICAL ADVISORS FROM DOD. HOPEFULLY AGREEMENT (OUR DRAFT IS IN FINAL STAGES) COULD BE REACHED IN LATE SUMMER OR EARLY FALL WHICH WOULD ALLOW TIME FOR AMPLE INFORMATION PROGRAM AND CONTACTING OF NEXT OF KIN OF THOSE CONFIDENTIAL

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US CITIZENS WHOSE REMAINS ARE IN CANAL ZONE AND SUBJECT TO DISINTERMENT. FORMAL PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD COME AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION. DOD NOTED THAT WITH THIS TIMING DISINTERMENT IN MID 1979 WOULD BE IN MIDST OF RAINY SEASON AND THAT CONSIDERATION AT SOME POINT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO REQUESTING PANAMA TO EXTEND DATE BY WHICH DISINTERMENT OF BODIES WOULD HAVE TO BE COMPLETED.

6. DARIEN GAP HIGHWAY: OMB HAS AGREED TO SUPPORT DOT'S REQUEST FOR \$40 MILLION (\$20 MILLION SUPPLEMENTAL FY 78, AND REGULAR APPROPRIATION OF \$20 MILLION FOR FY79), BUT COUPLES THIS WITH A PROPOSED RESTRICTION ON ANY CONSTRUCTION BEYOND THE RIO CANGLON IN PANAMA. DEPARTMENT HAS DRAFTED A LETTER TO OMB SUPPORTING DOT'S POSITION (ALSO APPROVED BY USDA) THAT CONSTRUCTION CAN SAFELY PROCEED TO THE TOWN OF YAVIZA, AND SHOULD DO SO ON ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY GROUNDS. INDICATIONS ARE THAT WE MAY WELL LOSE THIS ROUND, BUT DOT SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDS TO KEEP THE PROJECT IN BEING, WORKING ON THE ROAD AS FAR AS CANGLON, WHILE A NEW REQUEST FOR FY80 IS PREPARED. LONG TERM PROSPECTS FOR ACTUALLY CLOSING

THE GAP TO COLOMBIA REMAINS DEPENDENT UPON A SUCCESSFUL
FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA. AT A MEETING
8 JUNE, ATTENDED BY DEPARTMENT REPS, THE USDA VETERINARIAN

IN CHARGE OF THE U.S.-FUNDED PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA GAVE
A HOPEFUL REPORT, BUT INDICATED MUCH MORE MONEY AND
SEVERAL YEARS WOULD BE NEEDED BEFORE EVEN WESTERN
COLOMBIA COULD BE DISEASE FREE. USDA WILL THUS CONTINUE
TO STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY CONSTRUCTION OF THE HIGHWAY BEYOND
YAVIZA FOR AT LEAST TWO TO FOUR YEARS INTO THE FUTURE
AND VERY LIKELY MOST.

7. EXCHANGE OF NOTES ON ECONOMIC PACKAGE: BY SEPTTEL
EMBASSY WAS ADVISED OF CURRENT PLANS ON THIS SUBJECT AND
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ASKED TO REPORT ON GOP REACTION BY JUNE 13. IN A RELATED
ACTION AND BY ANOTHER SEPTTEL EMBASSY WAS ADVISED OF EXIM
PLANS FOR ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING PRESIDENT'S VISIT.

8. ARIAS REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT: REQUESTS
HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR A MEETING BETWEEN ARIAS AND THE
PRESIDENT. GENERAL CONSENSUS IN STATE OPPOSES SUCH A
MEETING. WE ARE TAKING NO ACTION AT PRESENT AND PLAN
TO LOOK AT SITUATION ON JUNE 12 IN LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS
OVER WEEKEND. WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED. VANCE

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